

What is claimed is:

1. A method of restricting execution of user requests for printing data, comprising:

defining a set of one or more restricted user requests, such restricted user requests being restricted according to characteristics associated with such restricted user requests;

receiving a user request having a characteristic;

determining whether the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests based on the characteristic of the received user request; and

receiving an authorization indicator before printing data associated with the received user request when the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the characteristic of the received user request relates to a selected printing mode for printing the data, the selected printing mode specifying at least one of printing colorant, printing resolution, printing speed, print media source, type of print media, output sorting, output binding, and surface coating disposed on output.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the received user request defines an aspect of a print job, and wherein printing data includes sending the print job to a printing device.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the user request is received from a person, and wherein defining includes receiving input specifying the set of one or more restricted user requests from an administrator of the printing device, the administrator being different than the person.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a numerical characteristic, and wherein at least one of the one or more restricted user requests defines a threshold value for the numerical characteristic, determining being based on a comparison of the numerical characteristic and the threshold value.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the numerical characteristic relates to printed output produced by executing the received user request, and wherein the numerical characteristic is at least one of size of printed output, amount of print media included in the printed output, amount of colorant consumed to produce the printed output, duration of printing to produce the printed output, and amount of power consumed in producing the printed output.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the authorization indicator is at least one of a password, a code, a string of characters, and a private key, and wherein receiving the authorization indicator includes requesting the authorization indicator after receiving the user request when the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

8. The method of claim 1, which further comprises suggesting an alternative, unrestricted characteristic upon determining that the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

9. A method of restricting execution of user requests for printing data, comprising:

defining a set of one or more restricted user requests according to printing modes and numerical characteristics associated with such restricted user requests;

receiving a user request selecting a printing mode and having a numerical characteristic;

determining whether the received user request is included in the set of restricted user requests based on the printing mode selected and the numerical characteristic of the received user request; and

receiving an authorization indicator before printing data associated with the received user request when the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

10. The method of claim 9, which further comprises suggesting an alternative, printing mode upon determining that the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the printing modes associated with the set of restricted user requests include multi-colorant printing.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the numerical characteristics associated with the set of restricted user requests include sizes of output.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the one or more restricted user requests defines a threshold value for the numerical characteristic, and wherein determining is based on a comparison of the numerical characteristic of the received user request to the threshold value.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the numerical characteristic of the received user request relates to an amount of a consumable expected to be consumed by printing the data associated with such received user request.

5 15. The method of claim 9, wherein defining includes receiving input that places a greater restriction on multi-colorant printing than on single-colorant printing.

10 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the input restricts any received user request that specifies printed output having a size over a specified page limit.

17. A method of restricting execution of user requests for printing data, comprising:  
15 defining a selective restriction on multi-colorant printing relative to single-colorant printing, the selective restriction including a page limit for multi-colorant printing;

receiving a user request specifying single-colorant or multi-colorant printing and defining a number of pages to be printed;

20 determining whether the received user request is included in the selective restriction based on the number of pages to be printed and the single-colorant or multi-colorant printing specified; and

receiving an authorization indicator before printing data associated with the received user request when the received user request is included in the  
25 selective restriction.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the authorization indicator is at least one of a password, a code, a string of characters, and a private key.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the received user request is sent by a person, and wherein receiving the authorization indicator includes requesting the authorization indicator from the person after receiving the user request.

20. A system for controlling execution of user requests for printing data, comprising:

a printing device configured to print data associated with user requests; and

a controller coupled with the printing device and including a set of restricted user requests according to characteristics associated with such restricted user requests, the controller having a received user request that has a characteristic, the controller being configured to determine if the received user request is included in the set of restricted user requests based on the characteristic of such received user request, and also configured to receive an authorization indicator before allowing the printing device to print data associated with the received user request when the received user request is included in the set of restricted user requests.

21. The system of claim 20, the controller being included in a separate device that is connected to the printing device.

22. A program storage device readable by a processor, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the processor to perform method steps for controlling execution of user requests for printing data, the method steps comprising:

5       defining a set of one or more restricted user requests, such restricted user requests being restricted according to characteristics associated with such restricted user requests;

          receiving a user request having a characteristic;

          determining whether the received user request is included in the set of one  
10       or more restricted user requests based on the characteristic of the received user request; and

          receiving an authorization indicator before allowing the printing device to print data associated with the received user request when the received user request is included in the set of one or more restricted user requests.

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23. The program storage device of claim 22, wherein the characteristic is a numerical characteristic, determining being based on a comparison of the numerical characteristic and a threshold value.

20       24. The program storage device of claim 23, wherein the numerical characteristic relates to printed output produced by executing the received user request, and wherein the numerical characteristic is at least one of size of printed output, amount of print media included in the printed output, amount of colorant consumed to produce the printed output, duration of printing to produce the  
25       printed output, and amount of power consumed in producing the printed output.